

Report to the Legislature

Pesticide Application Safety Committee

August 2022

SSSB 5550



Office of Environmental Public Health Sciences
Division of Environmental Public Health



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Executive Summary

In 2019, the Washington Legislature passed, and the governor signed [Substitute Senate Bill 5550](#) establishing the Pesticide Application Safety Committee (PASCO). The committee consists of 11 members. Its co-chairs are Washington State Department of Health (DOH) and the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA).

PASCO will be developing recommendations to improve the safety of agricultural pesticide application. An annual (through 2025) report to the Legislature will identify the recommendations. The Legislature also established an Advisory Workgroup to support PASCO's efforts by collecting information and making recommendations to PASCO.

[Substitute Senate Bill 5550](#) requires DOH to submit an annual report to the Legislature by May 1 each year to document the committee's progress. This report is intended to meet that requirement.

Background

In 2019, the Washington Legislature passed, and the governor signed [Substitute Senate Bill 5550](#) establishing the Pesticide Application Safety Committee (PASCO). The committee consists of 11 members co-chaired by the Department of Health and the Department of Agriculture.

Members to serve on the committee include:

- **Lauren Jenks: Committee Co-Chair**, Assistant Secretary, Environmental Public Health Division, DOH
- **Ignacio Marquez: Committee Co-Chair**, Regional Assistant to the Director - Eastern/Central WA, WSDA
- **Senator Rebecca Saldaña**, Senate Democrat Caucus, 37th Legislative District
- **Senator Judy Warnick**, Senate Republican Caucus, 13th Legislative District
- **Representative Tom Dent**, House Republican Caucus, 13th Legislative District
- **Representative Javier Valdez**, House Democrat Caucus, 46th Legislative District
- **David Gang**, Assistant Director, College of Agricultural, Human and Natural Resource Sciences, Washington State University
- **Gwen Hoheisel**, Pesticide Safety Education Coordinator, Washington State University Cooperative Extension
- **Eddie Kasner**, Research Scientist and Outreach Director, University of Washington, Pacific NW Agricultural Safety and Health Center
- **Craig Blackwood**, Assistant Director, Department of Labor and Industries
- **Calvin Ohlson-Kiehn**, Assistant Division Manager for Forest Resources, Department of Natural Resources

The PASCO is charged with developing recommendations for improving the safety of pesticide application via an annual report to the Legislature (through 2025) due by May 1 each year.

The Legislature also established an Advisory Workgroup to assist PASCO. The advisory workgroup is tasked with meeting periodically, collecting information, and making recommendations to PASCO. Upon direction from the PASCO, any number of topics can be assigned to the advisory workgroup based on their level of expertise, including but not limited to:

- Exploring how state agencies and the Washington Poison Center (WAPC) collect and track data
- Improving pesticide application safety of agricultural applications

- Leading an effort to establish baseline data for the type and quantity of pesticide applications used in Washington, to be able to compare the number of exposures with overall number of applications
- Researching ways to improve pesticide application communication among different members of the agricultural community, including educating the public in both English and Spanish about acute and chronic health information about pesticides
- Working with the industry and agricultural workforce to improve protocols and best practices for use of personal safety equipment for applicators and reflective gear for the general workforce

The Advisory Workgroup consists of the following members, representing the organizations and stakeholder groups that are specified in the legislation:

- WSDA
 - Ofelio Borges
- Employee organizations representing farmworkers
 - Elizabeth Strater, United Farm Workers
 - Lupe Sanchez, Opportunities Industrialization Center of Washington
- Farmworkers with expertise on pesticide application
 - Rigoberto Ibarra, Agrimacs
 - Josh Gefre, Mercer Canyon Farms
- Community and migrant health centers
 - Maria Benavides, Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic
- Growers that use aerial pesticide applications.
 - Open position
- Growers that use fumigation to apply pesticides
 - Kees Weyns, Weyns Farm
- Growers that use air blast sprayers
 - April Clayton, Red Apple Orchards
- Aerial applicators
 - Erin Morse, Washington Aerial Applicators
- Toxicologist
 - Matt Keifer, Internal Medicine/Occupational Medicine Specialist

At the time of this report, we have one vacancy in the Advisory Workgroup.

This report fulfills the requirement to provide a progress report to the appropriate committees of the Legislature by May 1, 2022.

PASCO Meetings

The most recent meeting was August 10, 2022. This was the first meeting of PASCO in the past two years due to COVID-19 response efforts. The goal of this meeting was to regroup and form a path forward determining priorities for PASCO and the Advisory Workgroup including an assessment of future meetings. Meeting agenda and materials are on our [Pesticide Application Safety Committee](#) website.

Advisory Workgroup Meetings

Advisory Workgroup will plan to meet after the fall harvest.